

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 PC-15 AID-20 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 DRC-01 NIC-01 /185 W

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P 041830Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5245

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAN JOSE 3545

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, CS

SUBJECT: PUNTARENAS RETURNS TO NORMAL

REF: SAN JOSE 3531, 3532, 3546

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PUNTARENAS RETURNED TO NORMAL
OCTOBER 4 AFTER ONE DAY STOPPAGE OF MUCH COMMERCIAL
ACTIVITY. THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN, AS PRESIDENT FIGUERES
ALLEGED IN HIS SPEECH, SOME COORDINATION BETWEEN THE
CURRENT LABOR UNREST AND THE PUNTARENAS PROBLEM.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH BEGAN YESTERDAY MORNING
OCTOBER 3 IN THE PACIFIC PORT CITY OF PUNTARENAS IN
PROTEST OVER THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO BUILD A NEW MAJOR
AND ALLEGEDLY COMPETING PORT INSTALLATION AT CALDERA SEVEN
KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE CITY, TAPERED OFF IN THE AFTERNOON
AND BY THIS MORNING HAD CEASED COMPLETELY. REPORTS FROM PUNTA-
RENAS INDICATED 90 PERCENT OF THE COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS
HAD CLOSED, SOME IN SYMPATHY WITH THE PROTEST, BUT
MOST OUT OF CONCERN FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE. PROTESTORS
TEMPORARILY BLOCKED THE MAIN HIGHWAY TO SAN JOSE
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BY MASSING AND SPREADING TACKS ON THE ROAD. OTHERS

PLACED BARRIERS ON THE RAIL LINE TO SAN JOSE.

3. BY MID-DAY A SPECIAL CONTINGENT OF 100 GUARDIA CIVIL HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO PUNTARENAS WHERE THEY OPENED THE ROAD, CLEARED THE RAIL TRACKS, AND APPARENTLY MISTAKENLY THREW TWO GAS GRENADES. EIGHT DEMONSTRATORS WERE REPORTEDLY ARRESTED, BUT WERE RELEASED LATER IN THE DAY. THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY CLAIMED THREE OF THESE ARRESTED WERE COMMUNISTS.

4. PRESIDENT FIGUERES'S TV SPEECH (SEE REFTEL) SUGGESTED COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE THREATENED SITET STRIKE SUPPORTERS AND THE CAPER IN PUNTARENAS. DEMOCRATIC SAN JOSE UNION LEADERS TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT THE PUNTARENAS EPISODE WAS STAGED IN SYMPATHY WITH SITET'S CAUSE. SEVERAL 1-HOUR LABOR STOPPAGES ON OCTOBER 2 IN PUNTARENAS SUGGEST THAT THERE WAS, IN FACT, SOME COORDINATION.

5. EMBASSY SOURCE IN PUNTARENAS SAID ON OCTOBER 3 THAT THE CITY HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL AFTER MANY PARENTS HAD ORGANIZED EVENING MEETINGS WITH GROUPS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO TALK THEM OUT OF CARRYING THE EXERCISE FURTHER. THE GUARDIA CIVIL, NEVERTHELESS, REMAIN ON ALERT TODAY.
VAKY

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